

The Salt Lake Tribune RECREATION

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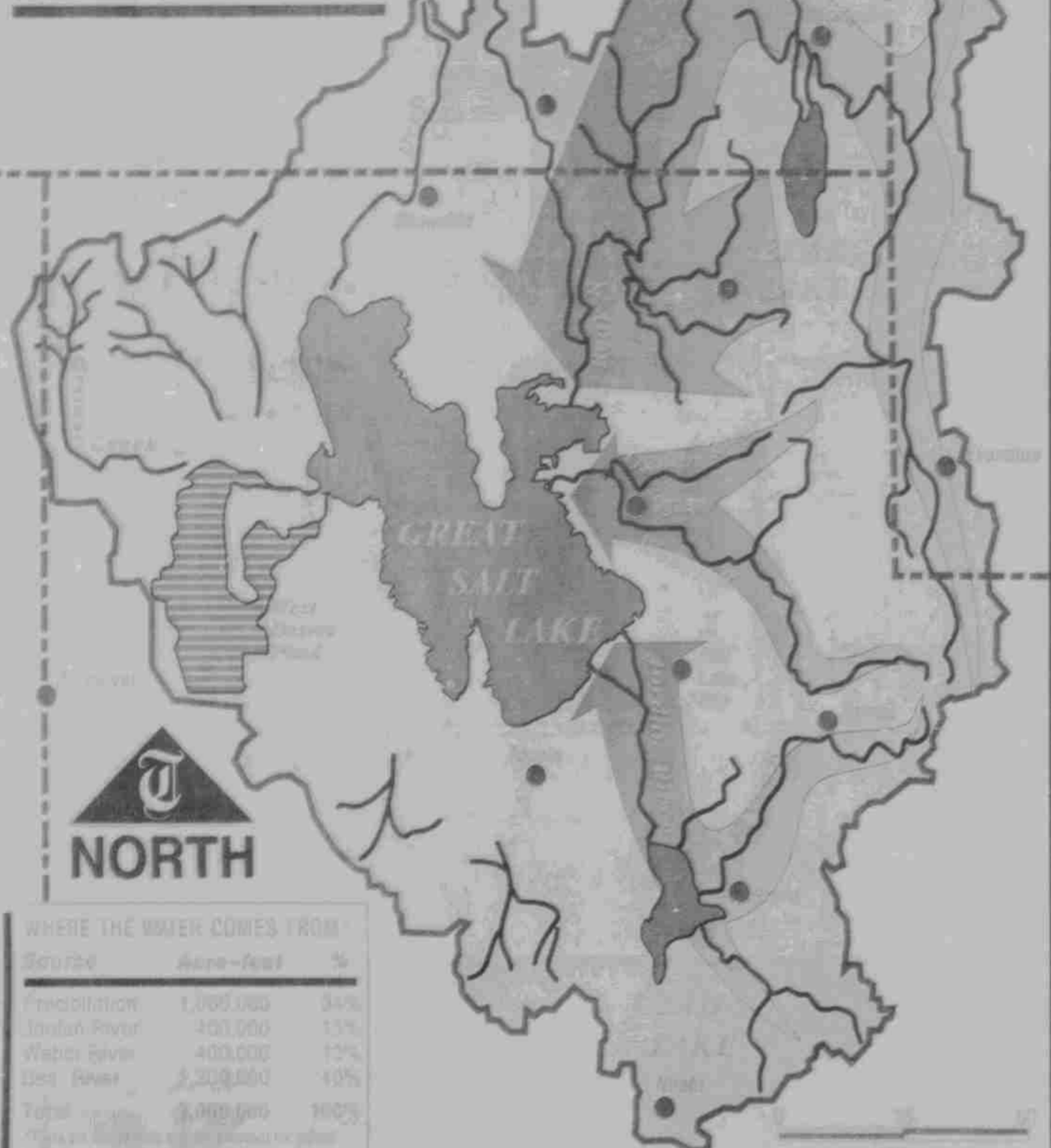
A YEAR WITH THE

Great Salt Lake

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TRIBUTARIES



Three major tributaries feed the Great Salt Lake. The rivers are Wasatch Front, Jordan River and Weber River. They are rich in fish and wildlife. They are also rich in minerals. They are also rich in history. They are also rich in culture. They are also rich in nature. They are also rich in life.

Valuable Tributaries Create Rivers of Life

By Tom Wharton

As she paddles a canoe on the Bear River near her Logan home, Alice Lindahl feels as if she's exploring the Okefenokee swamp.

There are no houses, no signs of civilization. Cloudy green water rolls past dead cottonwoods that serve as nurseries for great blue herons and baby great-horned owls.

His, snowy egrets, Franklin gulls, black-crowned night herons, pelicans and sandhill cranes duck in and out of bullrush and cattail marshes.

"It's my Jim Bridger experience," Lindahl says of the trip down the Bear, one of three major tributaries which surround the Great Salt Lake like a giant spider web.

Author Philip Fradkin writes in his book, *A River No More*, that "no group of people in the West since the coming of the whites has been more aware of the importance of water, more cohesive and diligent in searching, capturing it and distributing it or more suitably adapted to preserving and perpetuating a water-dependent culture in an arid land than the Mormons."

Almost from the first day the pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, they started diverting water from the Great Salt Lake tributaries for their own culinary and agricultural needs.

Almost 150 years later, the lake's three major tributary systems — the Bear, Weber and Jordan — have been dammed, developed and diverted to serve a growing society.

The rivers give Wasatch Front residents drinking water and generate electricity. Their wetlands filter pollutants created by industry and host millions of shorebirds and waterfowl. Farmers irrigate crops with diverted water.

Thousands of boaters use large reservoirs such as Pineview, Hyrum, and Deer Creek as well as Bear Lake. Anglers, canoeists, bicyclists and hikers spend hours in the lush parks and wildlife areas found in and along the rivers.

Says river runner Jim Boone of Lewiston: "I wish I had a time machine to go back and see what it was like."

Lloyd Austin, the chief of resource inventories and special studies for the Division of Water Resources, possesses such a machine. He uses it to examine the past and explore the future of Great Salt Lake water development.

Austin's computer tells him that all the diversion and development on the tributary system has reduced the Great Salt Lake's level by 4.8 feet in the past 150 years. He expects the lake to drop another 12 to 18 inches during the next 100 years.

Yet, as was discovered during the high-water years of the mid-1980s, man doesn't control the Great Salt Lake system.

"For all the development that's occurred on the lake system — including dams, the canals, the railroads — we're still at the mercy of whatever nature decides to do," says Dave Eskelsen of Utah Power and Light, which controls much of the Great Salt Lake water system.

Austin agrees. In order to contain the floods of the 1980s, the state or federal government would have needed to construct 110 dams the size of Pineview.

"We should try to control the system," he says. "That would be extremely difficult and costly. It's better to work with the system rather than fight it."

That's why Austin still defends the \$60 million project built in the 1960s to prevent the Great Salt Lake from flooding Salt Lake International Airport and I-80. Engineers pumped water into the west desert, creating what's now known as West Desert Pond. By expanding the size of the lake, the amount of evaporation increased.

Then, the local weather pattern changed. Now in the midst of a five-year drought, water managers contemplate building new dams on the Bear River system to accommodate the Wasatch Front's growing population.

The Bear River provides approximately 40 percent of the water which flows into the Great Salt Lake. About 34 percent of the inflow comes in the form of precipitation. The Jordan and Weber River systems each provide another 13 percent. A small portion of water comes from underground sources and streams flowing in from the north, south and west portions of the Great Basin.

Development of the tributaries has hurt ecological systems. On the Bear River Bird Refuge, for example, only one of five freshwater holding ponds filled last year, depriving birds of feeding grounds and roosting areas. Things could be worse this year.

"We've lost a river system but people are making money from agriculture," says Al Trout, refuge superintendent. "The Bear River is our lifeline. We need those summer flows."

Jody Williams, a water rights attorney for Utah Power and Light and a member of the Utah Wildlife Board, wonders how the ducks and shorebirds relying on the Great Salt Lake system survive.

"If we don't get enough water in the system, the marshes stagnate and the ducks start dying in late summer because of hypoxia," she says. "If we get too much water in the spring, their nests are flooded and wiped out."

In some ways, society now pays for its abuse of Great Salt Lake river systems. They have been dredged, diverted, polluted and abused. Now, government officials are trying to restore natural wetlands.

See C-7, Column 1

Dog Owners Put on Notice in Mill Creek Canyon

By Brett Prettyman
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

MILL CREEK CANYON — While dogs may be man's best friend, dogs don't know how to clean up after themselves.

This dilemma, magnified by irresponsible dog owners, has started a controversy on dog etiquette in Mill Creek Canyon.

"We renamed our favorite trail dog-poop trail," said one Mill Creek Canyon user. "It's OK though, because it makes you learn how to keep from falling down."

Last week, after a late morning cross-country trek, Galen Birdsley and Tabb George of Salt Lake were returning to their vehicle. They side-stepped dog defecation most of the way.

"It's kind of a problem, especially lower on the trail. It's not so bad up higher," said Birdsley.

"Almost everybody up there had a dog. There were at least 15," said George.

For Monique Carlson, a student at the University of Utah and a regular canyon visitor, dogs have proved to be more than just the builders of obscene obstacle courses.

"A couple of weeks ago I was coming down the trail just relaxing when a dog came out of no where and grabbed the back of my leg," she said.

While the dog didn't break her

skin it left quite a bruise. "I wasn't doing anything to provoke it. The owner said the dog didn't usually do that. If the dog was on a leash it never would have happened. People need to be more responsible with their dogs."

Carlson, like other canyon users, isn't against dogs in the widely used canyon. "I enjoy bringing a dog when I get a chance," she said.

Jim White of the Salt Lake Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service says complaints from both the health department and public have been issued. "If we don't see any improvement the health department will close the canyon to dogs because of health problems."

So, in an effort to please the public, the health department and dog owners, a new voluntary program was instigated over the weekend.

A sign installed at the trail head encourages dog owners to pick up after their dogs. To help achieve this, the forest service has installed a bag dispenser and disposal can at the site. "If people have any kind of ecology sense they will clean up after their dogs," said Dylecia Whiting of the Wasatch National Forest Service.

Flyers handed out to visitors in the canyon explain the rationale of the program. "With over a hun-

Many dog owners enjoy taking their pets into the outdoors. But, policies on dogs vary depending on the land management agency involved. Here is where you can take your dog in Utah:

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT:
Dogs are allowed away from undeveloped campgrounds. In campgrounds, dogs must be leashed.

NATIONAL PARKS:
Dogs must be leashed at all times. They are not allowed in buildings, on trails or in the backcountry.

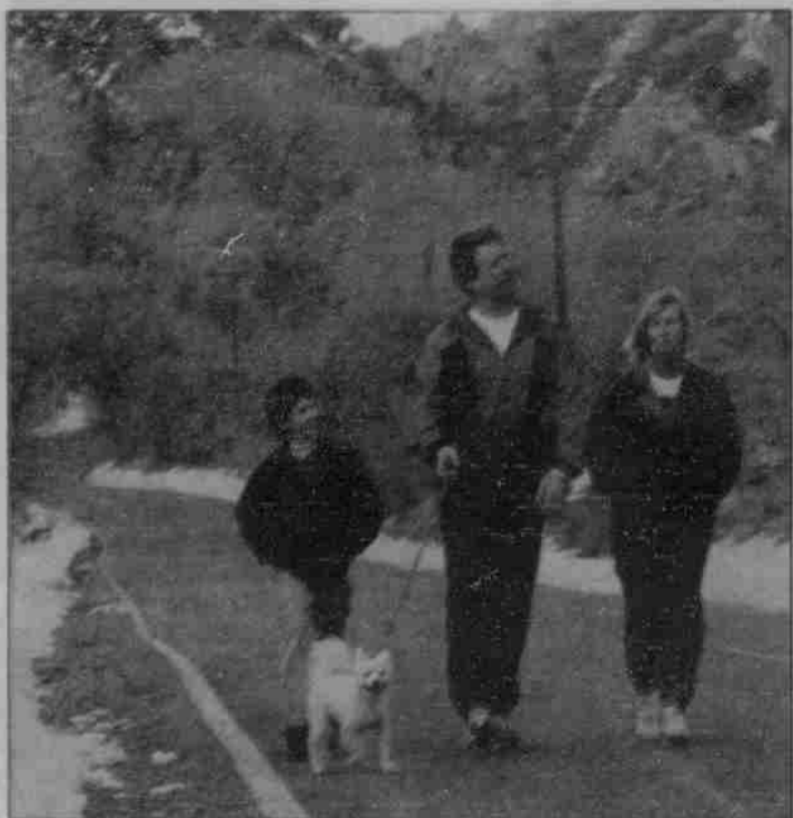
STATE PARKS:
Dogs are allowed, but must be on a leash no longer than six feet. Dogs are not allowed in the water.

NATIONAL FOREST:
Leashes are preferred, but not required, in most national forest backcountry areas. Leashes are, however, required in campgrounds.

SALT LAKE COUNTY CANYONS:
Dogs are not allowed in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons, Lamb's Canyon and most of Parleys Canyon due to watershed requirements. They are allowed, on leashes, in lower City Creek Canyon. They are allowed in Mill Creek Canyon, but dog owners are being asked to voluntarily clean up after their animals.

CITY PARKS:
A spot check of Salt Lake, Sandy and Orem city parks revealed the following policy: Dogs must be leashed and owners are encouraged to clean up after their animals. With the exception of seeing eye dogs and dog shows with permits, dogs are not allowed in county parks.

ded visitors a day, and plenty of dogs, that adds up to a lot of dog waste for everyone to look at and step around, not to mention a lot of dog waste eventually being washed into the creek."



The King family walks Shelo up Mill Creek Canyon. Dog owners have been asked to start cleaning up after their pets.

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